

PATH filing, completion delayed, again

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The PATH project, a substantial utility line stretching from West Virginia through Maryland, has been delayed again.

The Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline's completion has been moved back to 2014, according to Allegheny Energy.

The utility company had initially planned to file a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity with the Maryland Public Commission on Wednesday.

"We are still several weeks from filing a CPCN in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia," said Todd Meyers, manager of external communications for Allegheny Energy.

"Work remains on the preparation of that application, and we still plan to file in upcoming weeks," Meyers said.

The project, a \$1.8 billion power line and substation, is a joint effort of Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power. The line would cross Maryland and end up at a proposed substation in Kempton in southern Frederick County.

Allegheny Energy has held a number of public meetings showing possible routes for the line, but has not to date revealed the final path through the county.

The next round of public meetings will seek input from the public on any and all facets of the PATH project, Meyers said.

The meetings will be followed by evidentiary hearings to determine the need for PATH and that the proposed route is appropriate, Meyers said. PJM is the regional transmission organization that coordinates wholesale electrical operations in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

June 2014 buys Allegheny and AEP "breathing space to complete this critical backbone upgrade to the regional transmission grid," Meyers said.

Meyers said PJM continues to emphasize the need for upgrades in electrical power to the region, forecasting blackouts by 2014 if enough power is not brought to the area.

One group that has been monitoring the PATH project is Sugarloaf Conservancy. The organization, based in the southern part of the county, has called for Allegheny Energy to consider putting the power lines underground and to look at the impact of the route of the project on communities, historical sites and the environment.

The Sugarloaf Conservancy has asked that an independent review of the project be made.

Meyers said Allegheny Energy believes the Maryland Public Service Commission would include public meetings and other hearings in its review and could hire third-party experts if necessary.

